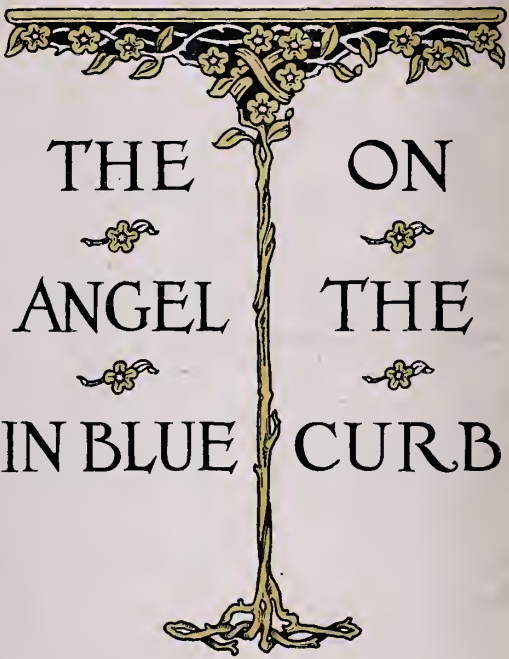
TWO TRUE STORIES and THEIR SEQUEL



INTERCHURCH·WORLD·MOVEMENT
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Two True Stories
and
Their Sequel

THE ANGEL IN BLUE

AND

ON THE CURB

INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT
OF NORTH AMERICA
111 Fifth Avenue, New York City

Price, 5 cents each; 50 cents per dozen;
$2.75 per hundred

The Angel in Blue

By C. A. Kelley

The Policeman who Brought Gifts to a Forgotten Man

Part I

THERE is an old man in a city not far from Chicago who is leading a heroic life. He is retired from active service, and lives with his aged wife in a modest cottage which he purchased a few years ago in order that he and his companion might have a place in which to spend their declining years.

He receives a pension from his former employer, but it is only half of what he expected, and because of this he has not been able to make the payments on their little home. So he said to his wife: "You take the pension money. It will be enough to care for you alone, and to make the payments on our cottage, and I will go and live in the 'Old People's Home.'" So he is living over yonder, a hundred miles from his companion. Once a year he goes to see her, turns over to her his meager pension, and then after a joyful visit returns to the "home" for another year.

This old man is a hero, and his companion is not less heroic. Few know of the struggles they are making to keep the wolf from the door, for they are quiet souls and do not advertise their poverty. The neighbors wonder at his long absence, for they do not

know the reason. May we not hope that their lives be spared long enough for them to have a few years together before death brings the final earthly separation and they enter the "house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens?"

"Who is this forgotten man?" He is a retired minister of a great church which pays him only half the amount he needs; and few voices have been raised in his behalf. The highest salary he ever received was eight hundred dollars, and upon this meager income he sent two daughters to college. Is it any wonder he could not save? Perhaps some day his great and prosperous church will realize the terrible injustice meted out to this "forgotten man."

Part II

On the second day after this story was printed, "The Angel in Blue" appeared—a uniformed policeman—and inquired whether the story was true. "It is all true," we replied. "We know the man well. He is an honored Christian minister."

"How much do they owe on their cottage? Find that out and let me know, and if it is not more than one hundred dollars, I will pay it myself. If it is more, I will go among my friends and raise the amount needed to clear the home of debt and to make it possible for the old folks to live together."

The debt proved to be two hundred and fifty dollars. With eager heart the policeman went out among his friends and in a few days returned with his face radiant at the thought of the joyful surprise he would bring to the

dear old couple. On Sunday he went to the cottage to deliver the gift with his own hands, receiving the gratitude he so richly deserved.

It was a happy day for the messenger and for the dear old people. The debt is paid. Their home is free. May they have the privilege of living long together to enjoy the twilight of their departing days!

From them soon came a letter saying: "We want to tell you that the climax was reached Sunday morning, when that dear, noble policeman, with a heart to be touched by the story of another's need, exhibiting five crisp fifty-dollar bills, told the story and presented the money. If 'gratitude is the fragrance of the heart,' then mine will perfume all his days. May the story of 'The Angel in Blue' encourage others in the hours of darkness!"

On the Curb

By C. W. Karns

WHILE walking down the street of a certain city one hot August afternoon, a voice called to me from across the shady street. There, seated on the curb, was a retired preacher from a distant part of the state.

My inquiry as to what he was doing there somewhat embarrassed him, but he replied:

"I have come down this way to stay awhile. You know that ever since I retired I have been serving a small church which paid me four hundred dollars and, with the help of my small retiring pension, we managed to live. But this spring the people thought that I was too old and wanted a young man. Having no income except my pension we could not pay the rent; we were forced to give up our house and store our goods. My wife has gone to live with her brother, and I am going to live with our married daughter."

Tears were streaming down the face of the old man, as he sobbed, "and I am not sure that we will ever keep house together again."

I went away with a heavy heart. The burden that this good man carried stayed with me for weeks as I pondered on what could be done to help him. One day, by appointment, I met a certain man at his home and told him the story of the old preacher on the curb. With moist eyes he said:

"I am heart-broken for that good brother! He is one of our most godly men, a fine Greek and Hebrew scholar, a good preacher, a man

who for fifty years has served the church acceptably without a shadow of reproach. He has raised a large family. His work was always on hard circuits, often with five or six appointments, where it was necessary to keep a horse and buggy and the salary was small. What can we do to help him?"

"You have a delightful home," I said. "Everything is comfortable and convenient. But"—pointing to a little house on the bank across the street—"I wish that we had a little house like that for that old preacher."

Finally my friend said: "I cannot get away from that old preacher on the curb. I have some vacant lots just above here, within five minutes' walk of the trolley cars. I will build a house for him, a six-room cottage with electric light, bath, hot and cold water, and steam heat. On the quarter of an acre of ground, I will set out fruit trees and build a chicken pen, so that the old preacher may have fruit and chickens. It will be ready by December."

I wrote to the old preacher telling him to notify his wife, from whom he was separated one hundred and fifty miles, to get ready to move into a house for which they would never need to pay rent, and which would be their home as long as they should live. Their answer is one of my most precious treasures.

Friends quietly paid the storage and freight bills, shipped and delivered their goods, and set them up in housekeeping in the delightful little cottage. There was no happier Christmas spent by any people than by these good folks, who through the providence of God, manifested by the kindness of His servants, were settled in their comfortable home.

How we wish that such a home might be provided for every retired minister! May the church, created by the services and sacrifices of such men, make provision for all who have given their lives to building up the kingdom, so that never again shall an aged minister, with home broken up for lack of money to pay the rent, be compelled to sit and mourn on the curb!

No. 305. I. 25. Jan. 1920.